

Recommendations from the Field:

A Montana Guide to Educational Planning

Comprehensive School Planning Guiding Principles

In June of 2001, the School Planning Committee convened a meeting in order to define an on-going school planning process that would be easily understood by many diverse stakeholders and align well with other planning processes currently used across the state.

The Montana Guide to Educational Planning outlines a process that will meet the planning and program evaluation process required by ARM 10.55.601, 10.55.701 and 10.55.704.

In order to guide the development of their end product, the School Planning Committee established the following guiding principals for Comprehensive School Planning.

- The plan must focus on improvement and increased student performance for ALL students.
- The plan must include a comprehensive system to measure and report change in demographics, attitude, achievement, and processes.
- The planning process must be a means to a greater end (student improvement) and not an end in itself
- Decisions must be made through a collaborative process with representation from a variety of stakeholder groups, including parents. Teaching staff must be a driving force in the planning process, including professional development planning.
- Decisions must be based on current district/school information about demographics, attitudes, achievement and processes. Goals with measurable objectives must be set in order to define and monitor change .
- The process must use and create data that is understandable, meaningful, and easily accessible by all stakeholder groups.
- The process must be continuous.

Using This Guidebook

In an attempt to promote meaningful collaboration and school planning and reduce duplicate paperwork, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, using the work of the School Planning Committee, has designed this comprehensive district planning guidebook. The Montana Guide to Educational Planning outlines a process that will meet the planning and program evaluation process required by ARM 10.55.601, 10.55.701 and 10.55.704.

The use of this guidebook is optional for all Montana districts. It is not the intention of the OPI to require a specific planning process. This guide book is meant to provide technical assistance to district and not to replace any successful process already in place.

PHASE 1: Getting Ready

LEADERSHIP TEAM BUILDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LEADERSHIP TEAM TIMELINES AND TASKS

Purpose:

To provide direction and set in motion an organizational framework for the development and implementation of a comprehensive educational plan: Who will lead and facilitate the curriculum and alignment process and the comprehensive school planning process? What is the schedule for standards alignment and comprehensive school planning?

Tasks:

- Identify and recruit a representative group of stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community members) that will act as process facilitators. Develop individual facilitation skills within leadership team.
- Provide leadership team with firm understanding and rationale of the comprehensive school improvement planning process.
- Understand the state evaluation rubric and report forms required for fulfillment of ARM rules and NCLB Act of 2002 accountability.
- Establish member duties, roles, and responsibilities.
- Draft initial time lines and tasks.
- Communicate direction and timelines with stakeholder groups and others.
- Find and recruit teams of stakeholders.



Section C

(Please Note: It is assumed that the district process for aligning state content and performance standards to curriculum and assessment is underway.)



Section D

Describe process used by district to design and align local curriculum, assessment and professional development plan.

ESTABLISH BELIEFS, MISSION STATEMENT (possibly OVERARCHING GOALS)

Purpose: *This step establishes a clear, concise statement(s) that communicate the communities' shared vision (philosophy) of education while providing focus and direction for comprehensive school plan.*

Tasks:

- Gather multiple ideas and perspectives about what learning community thinks is purpose for school and education.
- Narrow beliefs through consensus.

- Write Beliefs and Mission statements.



Section B

PHASE 2:

DISTRICT/SCHOOL PROFILING

GATHER DESCRIPTIVE AND PURPOSEFUL BASELINE DATA

Purpose: *This step provides factual information that will inform the decision-making and goal setting process. This information is in the form of demographic, attitudinal (perceptual), achievement (assessment), and process (policy and program) data..*

Tasks:

- Identify information to gather and location of data already available.
- Provide or develop tools for data collection. Assessments, surveys, etc. be sure to include multiple measures disaggregated by demographic and other information.
- Collate information.
- Display collected data in an easily understood, useful, and uniform format.
- Check with all program area groups (Title I, II, III etc.) for necessary program data for collection and analysis.



Section A

ANALYZE DATA

IDENTIFY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Purpose:

This critical activity serves as documentation of where students are with regard to beliefs and mission and overarching goal(s) of the school/district. This analysis is imperative if a school wishes to uncover areas in need of improvement in order to set objectives that will drive a comprehensive improvement plan.. It also serves to measure the impact of a change.

Tasks:

- Determine what needs to be known from the data collection at in the school profile (eg. What sub population is not performing up to the schools' expectation? What do teachers need to know to teach the standards? What grade level appears to be struggling the most with achievement?)
- Identify data sets that will give the most information concerning the questions you are asking.

- Develop consistent charting/graphing/narrative format.
- Create a sense of purposeful uncertainty and conscious curiosity in staff members through discussing and predicting outcome of data analysis.
- Examine data sets with as much collaboration and discussion as possible. Write narrative statements.
- Examine ties that lead back to established overarching goal(s).



Section A



Section B



Section D

Phase 3

ESTABLISHING MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES PLANNING INITIATIVES AND INTERVENTIONS

“Establish Measurable Objectives”

Purpose: *The sole purpose of school improvement is to improve student performance. The purpose of the establishment of overarching goals and measurable objectives is to identify a focus for improvement efforts based on the area of greatest need and to accompany that focus with clear measurable objectives for program implementation and increased student performance.*

Tasks:

- Prioritize needs based on analysis of data.
- Build consensus among team members as to the overall focus for improvement determined by analysis of needs.
- Determine appropriateness of pre-established overarching goals. Modify if necessary.
- Establish measurable (quantitative) objectives of anticipated increased performance, achievement, and attitudes.
- Create clear descriptors (qualitative) of program impact on teaching/learning and the environment.

Phase 3 “Develop Plan”

The Comprehensive School Plan is an outline of the activities, interventions and processes necessary for the school/district to reach its improvement goals and objectives. It translates the goals into actions and helps establish sustainability.

Possible Tasks:

- Collaboratively research and select interventions, activities and programs that will lead to reaching achievement goals.
- Plan implementation of activities, interventions, and programs that will help school/district reach the goals and objectives.
- Establish timelines.
- Delegate responsibilities.
- Create specific and discrete tasks for leadership team and others.

The implementation of a Comprehensive School Plan begins the process of continuous growth and change. It engages the full educational community and creates and expanded information base for further action. It is the action that will cause the reaction..

Tasks:

- Train all teachers involved as to the planned interventions or activities determined in order to meet improvement goals and objectives.
- Create plan for continuous follow up and support during implementation of activity or program.



Section B, Section E, Section F

Phase 4

“Implement Plan and Continuously Monitor Implementation”

Monitoring is the periodic collection of data to use in the review and possible revision of a comprehensive plan. The self-monitoring process is designed to check the progress of reaching the student centered goals and measurable objectives. It is also designed to see if the plan is being implemented as designed.

Possible Tasks:

- Collect ongoing teacher/student data indicated in the plan.
- Compare analysis results of data to goals, measurable objectives.
- If there is a gap between anticipated outcomes and actual outcomes, take corrective action to close the gap. CAUTION: Do not throw out your plan if you do not see immediate results. You may even see a slight dip in results in one or two measurements. Check all information that would indicate program impact. If teaching and learning appears to be improving, but assessment is not, continue with a watchful eye.
- Track results of ongoing monitoring. Share results.
- Repeat continuously throughout the process.

Phase 5: Yearly Summative Evaluation

Purpose:

The evaluation step is to determine the extent to which the goals were met and to provide data for future planning. In this step the school/district gathers and analyzes summative data aligned to goal and measurable objectives along with your descriptions of program impact(as defined in your comprehensive school improvement plan..

Possible Tasks:

- Collect summative data according to plan.
- Analyze data collected to determine what extent goals and objectives were met.
- Put results in a reportable format.

“Report Results”

Purpose:

The purpose of step 11, “Report Results” is to communicate the end result of the school improvement efforts to the appropriate stakeholders (school board, state and federal program personnel, community, and staff). It should be a summative document that is presented appropriately to a variety of audiences through newsletters, news paper articles, video/CD rom, and required reports.

Possible Tasks:

- Determine All Audiences
- Determine what to report for each audience (local, state, federal accountability)
- Determine report format (required formats vs. district created)
- Disseminate in a variety of ways.
- Establish avenue for feedback.

Re-entry Phase 1 “Determine Future Action”

Purpose:

After evaluating the results and reviewing the goals and measurable objectives, a decision needs to be made in order to keep the process on-going. 1) The goals have been met, so new goals will have to be established or 2) the goals were not met and re-entry into the process is necessary. This decision making takes place to determine the future direction for the Comprehensive Plan.

Tasks:

- Update data collections.
- Redirect energy back to the process to alter outcome for accomplishment of current goals or determine new goals.
- Celebrate achievements!

NOTES

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